

# CHILD STUDY

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# HEADLINES

Certainly no consideration of "Perennial Concerns of Parents," the topic of the Annual Conference of the Child Study Association held in New York last March, would be complete without the inclusion of the discussion on sex education, one of the most controversial—and perennial—subjects of them all, and one which is of concern to many parents. In this issue we are sharing with our readers papers from the Conference on "Sex Education—A Critical Evaluation."

Dr. Rudolph M. Loewenstein, of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, discussed provocatively some of the controversial issues of sex education. The other two papers were presented by members of the Association's staff—Sidonie M. Gruenberg, director, and Aline B. Auerbach, of the Family Counseling Service. Both give much of interest in the history of sex education, and much of value on sources of additional information and aids through films and books. Some of the thoughtful remarks of Dr. S. Bernard Wortis, Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology at the New York University Colleges of Medicine, who served as chairman of the sex education session of the Conference, are presented here as the editorial.

The Winter issue of the magazine will take up another all-important subject—"Other People in Your Child's Life."



It is with regret that we announce that after several years of understanding and imaginative service as editor of CHILD STUDY, Harriet Eager Davis has resigned in order to give more time to her writing.

Beginning with the forthcoming issue, the magazine will be edited by Frances Ullmann. For several years Miss Ullmann was an editor of the *National Parent-Teacher* and later became the first editor of *Calling All Girls*. More recently she wrote *Girl Alive!*, a handbook on how to be happy though an adolescent girl, which the Child Study Association highly commends for teen-agers and their parents.

# Changing Attitudes in Sex Education

The problem of sex education is important and perennial both because we know too little about how to share our knowledge with our children, and because the social attitudes in the American scene and in the American family are constantly changing. Already sex education in this country has gone through many trials and modifications and it must, through the natural evolutionary process, go through many more.

Present-day attitudes and traditions in our society with regard to sex behavior are derived from needs and from ideas handed down to us through the ages. Some of these traditions were codified in law and have become a frozen segment of our mores. In considering the changes of law and of attitude which need to be made, it would be wise to remember that sexual function, and, therefore, sexual behavior, in man, is dominated by his mind. In lower animals and in the lower primates, the endocrine factors play the important part, but as one mounts the mammalian scale to chimpanzees and apes, the factors of social status in the group, of social dominance, and of aggressiveness, all become very important in determining sexual behavior.

Biologists tell us that neuro-muscular patterns for both male and female sexual behavior exist in all humans at birth. It is the culture, however, which conditions the individual to perform in one or another fashion, successfully or unsuccessfully. For many years we have recognized the fact that early childhood attitude patterns, learned in the home before the child really acquires factual sexual knowledge, are vitally important in determining his adjustment as an adolescent and later as an adult.

About this problem of attitudes and adjustment, however, we need more basic studies. Much of the psychiatric interpretation of problems of sexual maladjustment have come to us from a segment of people who have difficulty in their total adjustment to living. Certainly if we have learned anything in the past fifty years since Freud first focused attention on the subject, it is that sex behavior in most people is perhaps a delicate barometer of total personality adjustment. It is not the sexual maladjustment itself which causes the difficulty but the other way around—the total adjustment difficulty of an individual may be expressed in part by his sexual maladjustment.

Moreover, biologists tell us also that variations exist in sex behavior, and these have been observed in animal as well as in human societies. Social taboos very strongly color the attitude of our culture toward such experiences, and a great social time-lag exists between our statutory, legal standards and the sexual practices of our own people. In many states, for instances, the law clearly indicates that the very fact that a married man has sex relations outside of marriage nullifies the marriage. If the Kinsey data are accurate, forty per cent of college-bred men would be, by this fact, divorced; and when the report on women, which Dr. Kinsey is now completing, is published, we may find equally revealing statistics about women.

In view of the inevitable evolutionary process that occurs in all societies, it would seem time to modify our attitudes toward sexual behavior and the sexual impulse, tempering our laws with the combined wisdom of the biologist, the psychologist and the humanist.

S. BERNARD WORTIS, M.D.



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# Sex Education Today

SIDONIE MATSNER GRUENBERG

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FOR a great many years now people have been talking about "sex education." Yet surprisingly enough all the old questions about it are still being debated. Is it necessary to give children information about sex? When should we begin? What should we tell them? Who should do the telling? How far should we go in talking to children, to adolescents?

Our attitude toward these questions, however, has undergone considerable change. Everybody recognizes that in growing up children inevitably do get some "education" regarding sex, even if it isn't always the kind we should like. The question then becomes not *whether* but *how* to give them the best possible education in this respect.

Educators, parents, religious leaders, social workers and public officials generally agree that some kind of planned sex education is necessary, although there is less agreement as to how and by whom it should be given. "Sex education" as a separate subject has at least been removed from the list of courses to be taught in school. This has come about not because the schools dismissed the problem as unimportant or evaded their responsibility, but rather because of a recognition that education is vastly more than telling or instructing or drilling children. More and more teachers and others working with children are coming to think of purposeful education with regard to sex as a guidance of attitudes and feelings, integrated with all the experiences and influences that shape the child's character and personality.

This view of "sex education" is itself the result of decades of controversy. It forms a basis of agreement for many discordant views, for it is sufficiently "scientific" to include findings of biologists, anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists and is at the same time acceptable to many religionists since it includes ethical considerations and emphasis on emotions and attitudes.

This comprehensive and organic view received unexpected support from a group of biologists who attempted a scientific study of human sexual behavior—a study without any moral or social judgments. The famous Kinsey Report dismisses sex instruction—that is, factual information on the anatomy

and mechanics of reproduction—as having little or no effect upon patterns of sexual behavior. "Patterns of behavior," they write, "are products of attitudes, and attitudes may begin shaping long before the child has acquired very much, if any, factual information."

This, of course, bears out the experiences of all who have worked with children in those early years before they are offered any systematic education. It is no new discovery that "all education begins in the cradle."

With the recognition that the home is the child's first educator, and that his learning is made up of feelings and attitudes, it became easier to agree that *sex education begins in the home* and remains in the home for some time. This acceptance eliminated one area of acrimonious debate and cleared the way for removing two others.

First, those groups that most vigorously opposed "sex education" as being nobody's business but the home's, yet continued to blame parents for all the shortcomings of their children, finally made a great discovery. It took a scientific study to show them that "parents neglect their duty" in respect to sex education because they "simply do not know how to broach the subject . . . because no one has ever taught them how to tell their children the facts."<sup>1</sup> This simple explanation of parental neglect re-emphasizes the great need for sex education of parents as well as of their children.

Second, these same groups discovered that sex education, though it begins in the home, does not end there, but continues through most of life. Before very long, the child has to associate with other children and no home can supply enough companions. Before the child reaches school age, his companions take over a significant part of his education, including his education in regard to sex. This fact has troubled many parents. Some of them try to protect their children against all except highly selected companions of their own set, thus obstructing their social development and adjustment. Through such over-protection, the child's personality suffers as well as his "sex education."

<sup>1</sup> "Self-Revelation of the Adolescent Boy," Urban H. Fleegle. Bruce, 1945.



We have come to recognize that the socializing of the child depends upon his active experiences with others, in many different relationships. It is for this reason that educators concerned with character education and sex education have come to rely more and more on the various projects and excursions and dramatics and games outside the classroom, and less and less on teaching facts and precepts. Schools have been learning also to consider individual variations among children, to give consideration to children's emotions and desires, to recognize that their pupils are boys and girls, not neutral, abstract children.

Gratifying as some of these changes have been, they left large areas untouched. The most effective work done by the pioneers in sex education was probably with the youngest children in the home, in nursery schools, in kindergartens. This was chiefly because young persons working intimately with young children are generally still able to change their attitudes. The pioneers themselves, however, were adult parents and teachers who undertook to break through the vicious circle, striving against prevailing taboos and usages, trying to re-educate themselves by grasping at new ideas and understandings. That they did so successfully is evident, for more and more adults raised in the spirit of such work with young children a generation ago are today reaching and influencing older boys and girls.

From the first, these adults have looked to books to help them in the re-education of other adults as well as in their approach to young people. The changes in attitudes and practices regarding the guidance and re-orientation of young people toward sex are reflected in the books that have been published over the years.<sup>2</sup>

The same changes are reflected also in other instructional aids, such as charts used in schools and in specially prepared motion pictures. In spite of definite progress toward integrating visual aids in education, however, we have constantly to remind ourselves that neither books nor movies *can serve as substitutes for a continuing human relationship* to help the growing child clarify his experiences and his doubts. Films especially, being both popular and dynamic, are likely to be counted upon to substitute for living and learning experiences, the more so since the pressure upon schools to provide education in many areas is so great.

"They have a right to know" is the theme song, as though knowledge of facts is the primary need for these children. Facts are, of course, essential; but any one of us can find out from his medical acquaint-

tances whether their knowledge of anatomy made it easy for them to interpret life and growth and reproduction to their own children.

Children want and must have the facts; but facts are worthless by themselves, however clearly or graphically presented. Our education and guidance must consider the feelings, the attitudes, the values and the maturing of the individual child. Many books, like many educators, have, until very recently, gone on the assumption that sex is just another "subject" with no unique significance, and therefore to be "taught objectively." In using films with classes of young people, teachers often seem to imply, in their tone and manner, "You see, it is just another subject; it can be taught like any other subject." Yet as one watches the youngsters, and listens to them, both during the film showing and after it, one is aware of emotional overtones that certainly do not appear in a lesson in arithmetic or grammar.

### *An Evaluation of Recent Films*

Two recent films illustrate the differing attitudes among those engaged in sex education. While both films recognize that the learner's questions arise early and normally out of life in the home, one of them sticks to the "tell-them-the-facts" school of thought;<sup>3</sup> the other recognizes that attitudes are quite as significant as correct information.<sup>4</sup>

Although the first film was prepared for upper high school and college students, it introduces its educational content by means of a family scene in which a little boy embarrasses his father by asking him a number of important questions. How do people get babies? Why do only mothers have babies? What has the father to do with it? Why do mothers have to go to the hospital? The suggestion here seems to be that these questions would not have embarrassed the father if he but knew the correct answers. The film proceeds to supply these answers. Based on present-day knowledge of anatomists and physiologists, they are technically correct and impressively presented. As information the film is excellent. But it apparently proceeds on the assumption that the embarrassment shown by the father must be a universal accompaniment of such learning and that he should pour out all these facts at once to the little boy.

The excellent instruction in human reproduction in this film might well have been left frankly just

<sup>3</sup> "The Story of Reproduction." McGraw-Hill, Text Film Dept., New York, N. Y.

<sup>4</sup> "Human Growth." E. C. Brown Trust, University of Oregon Medical School, Portland, Ore.

(Continued on page 116)

<sup>2</sup> "Current Trends in Books on Sex Education," page 101.



# Current Trends in Books on Sex Education

ALINE B. AUERBACH

WE have seen so many books on sex education in recent years that we are apt to forget how recent this development is in educational history. At the turn of the century, sex as a topic of conversation was still largely taboo. As for books on the sex education of children, there were none, because children were thought not to have any interest in sex matters, or any knowledge of them. This interest was supposed to come to them suddenly and appear full-blown at maturity, when they could be given—or could somehow get for themselves—such information as they needed.

Gradually, however, the pioneering studies of sex in and out of marriage by Havelock Ellis, Westermarck, Van de Velde and others opened up new concepts and wider interpretations. And in 1912 there actually appeared a book by Moll, now forgotten, called "The Sexual Life of the Child" (*Macmillan*, 1912)—and sex education literature had begun.

At first the books that appeared were highly moralistic, in the limited puritanical sense. They recognized that young people needed to know the facts of sex and reproduction, but this information was given chiefly in order to prevent illegitimacy and venereal disease and the books were written in a tone that was quite frightening. While on the one hand they hinted at the normality of sex interest and sex relations, on the other they surrounded the whole subject with fear and horror.

A wider interpretation of sex education came from the growing field of child development research. By observing children individually and in groups, a composite picture was gathered together of the gradual development of sex interests in childhood, beginning in their earliest years. This concept was reinforced by the findings of psychoanalysis which began slowly to find their way into popular educational material.

As a result of this wider understanding, important new material began to appear. "Parents and Sex Education," by Benjamin C. Gruenberg (originally published by the U.S. Public Health Service, 1923, and reprinted by the *Viking Press*, 1932), was the first to explain the normal course of children's interests and to suggest what parents should do to explain sex matters to their children. Mrs. Sidonie M. Gruenberg, too, was a leader in this field, recognizing the need to incorporate sex education with other aspects of parent education. "New Patterns of Sex Teach-

ing," by Frances Bruce Strain (*Appleton-Century*, 1934), helped parents to overcome their own self-consciousness by giving specific answers they could use to meet their children's questions.

The chief characteristic of this second stage of sex education was its intellectual approach, stressing children's intellectual curiosity and giving parents intellectual tools to use in guiding them. Implicit in much of this material were two assumptions—first, that sex matters were impersonal and objective, and could and should be handled as such; second, that if one answered children's questions, their curiosity would be "satisfied" and would therefore pass away.

But as studies were carried further, the limitations of this intellectual approach became more and more apparent. Children *are* curious and want to know many things, but behind their words lie deep feelings—feelings about themselves as individuals, about their bodies and bodily functions, about their relations with other people, feelings of which they themselves are often not aware, which grow out of their many experiences with the people around them as well as from the words they are told. It became clear also that parents, too, have feelings, growing out of *their* own early experiences and the culture in which they live, which complicate and sometimes even nullify the intellectual task they set for themselves. The Child Study Association voiced this wider point of view in a pamphlet, "Sex Education, Facts and Attitudes," now out of print and superseded by the widely distributed "When Children Ask About Sex," and in its books and other publications. Other writers also recognized that guiding children in their intellectual understanding was only a small part of the whole task of sex education.

Here, too, it was the psychoanalytic concept of the psychosexual development of children and the part this plays in the formation of the total personality which furnished the background for this deeper interpretation. Originally formulated by Freud in "Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex" and developed in further detail by his many followers, this concept has only recently begun to be clearly stated in sex education literature. It is to be found, for example, in a chapter in "You and Psychiatry," a simplified presentation of psychiatric principles recently prepared by Dr. William Menninger and Munro Leaf (*Scribner's*, 1948).



This third stage, then, recognizes the emotional factors in sex education and the significance of these factors in the development of personality. From this point of view, we can regard children's developing sex interests, not as something we must satisfy so that it will pass away, but rather as something we expect children to have continuously, something we help them to build up and integrate wholesomely into their personality. From this point of view, too, we are questioning whether sex matters *can* be impersonal and objective even under the most mature guidance. Perhaps sex concerns always carry with them some emotional content, by their very nature, which one should recognize and handle accordingly.

Sex education books had been appearing in gradually increasing numbers over many years. But 1948 marked a tremendous upsurge in this material, unquestionably stimulated by the now famous Kinsey Report. "Sexual Behavior of the Human Male" by Dr. Kinsey and his associates (*Saunders, 1948*) presented the findings of a study on sex behavior stating in statistical form many facts already generally recognized by students of behavior. But because of its wide circulation this book succeeded in bringing sex to the fore as nothing else has done, and as a result the public has been deluged with books, pamphlets, magazine articles, radio programs and films.

The flood of books alone has been enormous. These include books for small children, mostly in the guise of story-books, and books for adolescents, books for young people as preparation for marriage, and books for parents. All are sincerely trying to build better sex understanding and sex attitudes, in the hope that children and young people of today will grow up to have happier marriages and will give their own children a better start to a more fulfilled life.

On the whole, the books for children and adolescents are disappointing. Some contain fairly good factual material, but also some *misinformation*; under a breezy, slangy style some carry a basic preachiness and moralistic tone quite at variance with the apparent informality of the writing. They cannot compare with two earlier books for younger adolescents, "Being Born," by Frances Bruce Strain (*Appleton-Century, 1936*), and "The Wonder of Life," by Dr. Milton I. Levine and Jean H. Seligmann (*Simon & Schuster, 1940*), both of which have fine, simple content, given directly without camouflage.\*

\* *Author's Note:* A new book for children from 6 to 10, "A Baby Is Born: The Story of How Life Begins," also by Milton I. Levine, M.D. and Jean H. Seligmann (*Simon & Schuster, 1949*) appeared after this article was written.

There has also been a series of books on boy-girl relations written in various tones—some of them as confidential letters, some as talks to young girls—which have a rather curious emphasis. Again, under the cloak of camaraderie and a free give-and-take, the old moralistic attitude comes through. Besides, they seem to advocate a sharing of experiences between daughter and mother to a degree that is not natural and set a model for other mothers to copy that seems almost unwholesome—and in most cases would not be accepted by the young people anyway! Again, two earlier books accomplish the same goal much better, Alice Keliher's "Life and Growth" (*Appleton-Century, 1938*), and Winifred Richmond's "Making the Most of Your Personality" (*Farrar & Rinehart, 1942*).

The other new books are hard to summarize. They represent a general unevenness, and an overlapping sometimes even in the same book of the moralistic, the overintellectualized and the emotional aspects of sex education. Where they attempt to interpret deeper motivations of behavior, they often oversimplify so that the material becomes meaningless.

They also show another trend which bears watching—an attitude of permissiveness toward any and all kinds of sex behavior in children. One recent book on the sex interests of children, for example, includes a collection of short observation records at different age levels, showing a wide range of so-called typical sex interests of children. The author recommends that parents and teachers continue to record such observations, which "will prove an illuminating and enriching experience. After all, who would be willing to hamper the legitimate onward progress of the unfolding of a child's sexual nature?" Neither the observations nor the discussion that follows, however, attempt to evaluate what may be "the legitimate onward progress of the unfolding of a child's sexual nature" and what may fall beyond the bounds of the legitimate. The book would seem to imply that any kind of behavior and talk in childhood related to bodily functions, sex differences, reproduction, sex play, affectionate physical contact between children of the same sex or of the opposite sex, *at any age*, should be seen as normal and allowed to pass. There is no suggestion that some of this behavior might be a sign that a child is struggling with feelings and doubts that he cannot express directly, and that he may need help and possibly, in some cases, control, as protection against his own impulses.

Of the books that were published in 1948, the

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# Some Controversial Issues in Sex Education

RUDOLPH M. LOEWENSTEIN M.D.

RUDOLPH M. LOEWENSTEIN, M.D., presented this paper at the Child Study Association's annual conference in March of this year. Dr. Loewenstein is one of the founding members of the Paris Psychoanalytic Society and Institute, vice-president and instructor of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, and Associate Clinical Professor at Yale University Medical School.

PSYCHOANALYSIS traces certain symptoms, like anxiety states and compulsive thoughts, to conflicts in childhood related to sexuality. They are connected with childhood sexual interests, either in the form of sexual play, solitary or with other persons, children or grownups, or in the form of fantasies or strange beliefs. The reactions of the environment to these sexual interests, or the child's own reactions in the form of shame, fear and guilt feelings, bring about conflicts which express themselves in neurotic symptoms such as anxiety and compulsions.

Sexual interests in children and in adolescents sometimes differ so considerably from those of the so-called normal adult, that the average grownup would have difficulty in understanding and evaluating their significance. This is one reason why it took so long to become aware of the existence of sexuality in children. Any analyst's office, however, offers examples of this interest and the problems it creates for the child.

A psychoanalyst was called by the parents of a twelve-year-old boy when they noticed a sudden change in the child's behavior. For several weeks he had become unable to do his homework; he repeatedly washed himself; he avoided touching some of his personal belongings; and he displayed a great deal of anxiety.

After a few interviews with the child, the analyst was able to learn that the boy's symptoms were related to his recently started masturbation, which the boy considered a very dirty thing. Shortly before the outbreak of the symptoms, the boy had had his first orgasm and believed that he had injured himself seriously by masturbating. The analyst was able to reassure him, explaining the nature of sexual functions, and the symptoms disappeared as rapidly as they had begun.

Unfortunately, many cases develop less favorably. We know of innumerable cases of entire lives disturbed by the fears left from guilt feelings about masturbation in early childhood.

Girls whose neurotic attitude makes them avoid contact with men are often girls who believe that the mere contact of bodies might cause them to become pregnant and are terrified by the idea of marriage and childbirth.

Since these observations reveal the part played in neuroses by frustration and anxiety it was thought at one time by parents and educators that if children could grow up in an atmosphere of indulgent enlightenment in matters of sexuality and given, as soon as possible, all information on the "facts of life," these neurotic difficulties might be avoided, and the maximum happiness of the child attained. Among these intelligent and well-meaning, well-informed parents, some not only explained the facts of life to children but avoided any prohibition of a child's sexual curiosity. They not only permitted children to see them nude, but also let them indulge in all sorts of sexual activities.

The unexpected result of this sex enlightenment can now be observed. The results, in many cases, are not what the parents and educators anticipated.

A young woman who, at the age of four or five, was told by her parents all about the facts of life, nevertheless firmly believed all through her childhood and adolescence that impregnation occurred through contact of the parental navels, and that children were born through the navel. When she was fourteen, a man walked close to her in a drug store. For several weeks she was terrified that she had become pregnant, and only at the age of seventeen did she ask for the correct information.

Another example is that of a little girl who thought that impregnation follows the intake of certain foods. When her mother explained to her that impregnation was the result of the father's semen penetrating the mother's ovum or egg, the girl played a game in which she became pregnant by eating eggs.

These are not exceptions; they are the rule. Children's fantasies, or what Freud called "childhood



sexual theories," are still preserved in children in spite of the correct information which they may be given. Most of these childhood sex theories about impregnation and delivery center around eating, defecating, urinating and mutilation of the body. Even the differences of sex, particularly the absence of penis in girls and women, is connected in the minds of boys and girls with the belief that the girl has been mutilated. Not only do these children cling to their sexual theories, but frequently when correct information is given them concerning, for instance, parental intercourse, they react to it with disbelief, resentment and disgust, if it is not given in the right way at the right time.

### *The Beginning of Sexual Ideas*

We know now that sexual ideas do not start in puberty, but much earlier. Sexuality in early childhood is vitally connected to the needs of a human being and in early life is centered around the food intake and excretory functions. The first, called the oral phase, which predominates in early childhood, is followed by the stage in which interest in and enjoyment of bowel functions play a significant part. This phase of the development of sexuality is called the anal-sadistic, because some of the aggressive and destructive tendencies have at that stage a particular intensity. The genital organs in themselves start playing a role only later on as a source of interest and pleasure, approximately from the third year of life.

However, one cannot adequately understand all the facts pertaining to sex education without taking into account the fact that, parallel to the instinctual development there is a development of ego-functions; and that in the great majority of normal children, sexual interest abates around the age of five or six. The child then goes through what we call the latency period. During this period, sexuality seems to be dormant, although it is hardly ever completely so. In fact, this diminution of sexual interest in children is actually due to an intense struggle carried on by the child against its own sexual desires. The successful struggle against sexuality during the latency period has a counterpart in the development of certain ego-functions and of the social adjustment so essential at the age when children begin to go to school.

It is in puberty that the sexual interest reappears with great intensity due to the anatomical development and physiological changes occurring then. It is from puberty on that normal sexual interest becomes increasingly if not exclusively centered around the genital organs.

These facts should throw light upon certain puzzling results of sexual enlightenment and help to explain the fact that children brought up in very permissive atmospheres sometimes present neurotic symptoms. These results are attributed to several factors. First of all, parents have mistakenly thought that children's sexual interest and curiosity were merely intellectual. Giving these children knowledge does not take care of the essential aspect of this interest, the emotional one.

Nor does permissiveness toward children in sex matters exclude emotional conflict in them about sexuality. This may be due to a discrepancy in the parents' behavior, of which the child is very well aware. One should not forget that in talking on sex matters, parents carry over unconsciously conflicts from their own child-parent relationship, frequently revealed in embarrassment or in an undue thrill at discussing the forbidden.

The completely permissive education has failed to prevent the appearance of neuroses for still another and particularly important reason. Neurotic symptoms are fundamentally based on emotional conflicts produced not only by the parents' prohibitions but by the child's own guilt feelings and fears connected with his own sexuality. Psychoanalysis enables one to observe that these conflicts center around instinctive demands and the inner as well as outer forces which oppose them. These conflicts are inherent in the development of every human being and therefore cannot be disposed of by permissiveness in sex matters. When a child is given complete indulgence, he usually reacts to it with some kind of guilt feelings or anxiety.

Frequently permissiveness may increase the intensity of conflict in children. Indeed, the sexuality of children does not exist *per se* but is directed to the most important persons in the child's life: the parents and siblings, and for that reason becomes the source of most conflicts.

The result of psychoanalytic treatment of neurotic individuals shows that while certain disturbances are due to too much prohibition, others are due to fixations for the opposite reason—fixations produced by too much gratification from certain forms of infantile sexuality or by too much libidinous attachment toward parents or siblings.

For all these reasons, overpermissiveness, particularly when it amounts, in certain cases, to seduction, does not prevent neurotic disturbance but even provokes it. "Seduction" in this sense means behavior

*(Continued on page 122)*



# The Case of Jimmy—A Short Record

Adapted from the records of the Family Counseling Service of the Child Study Association

MRS. D., an attractive woman in her middle thirties, with a warm, friendly, motherly appearance and manner, came to our counseling service with the problem of her seven-year-old son, Jimmy, who was stuttering. When he first began to talk, at two, she had been troubled by the way he caught his breath when talking, but she was not aware of the stuttering as such until he was three and a half. A year ago the symptom became so severe (sometimes it was five minutes before he could get out a simple sentence) that she took him to a speech clinic for help. He showed so much improvement after a series of speech lessons that at his teacher's suggestion they terminated the lessons. But three months later, the stuttering was worse than ever. He began moving and jerking his whole body in his effort to speak, so once again she took him for speech lessons. At the time she came here, the speech had again improved somewhat, but this time, not satisfied with what might be merely the temporary alleviation of the symptom, she determined, if possible, to get at the root of the difficulty.

## History

Mrs. D. was the youngest of four children, in a family that was economically secure until her father died when she was sixteen, necessitating her giving up her plans for college. Mr. D. was the youngest, too, in a large New England family. He was a hard-working, ambitious young lawyer, but was never too tired to be companionable with his wife and son.

The D.'s had been married five years and had been eager for a child for some time when Jimmy was born. The mother felt unusually well during her pregnancy, and delivery was normal and easy. Jimmy weighed about eight pounds, and though he was weaned entirely to the bottle when he was one month old because his mother had insufficient milk, he gained well from the beginning and was a chubby, happy baby. His development was somewhat in advance of his age, especially in speech; he said words clearly when he was less than a year old; put them together soon thereafter. There had been no thumb-sucking or nail-biting. His mother noticed that he was left-handed at an early age, but did not try to change this.

He was toilet trained early, having first used a child's toilet seat when six months old. By thirteen

months, he could tell his mother when he needed to go, and was completely dry, even at night, by eighteen months. All this was accomplished without friction, and he never reverted. From the time he was two until he was four years old she had to entertain him a bit at mealtime. As time went on, she ate dinner with him instead of waiting for her husband, feeling that by doing so she could get him to eat and weigh more. The doctor, however, said he was well-nourished, not underweight, and that his health was good.

Jimmy slept soundly through the night until he was four years old, when he began to be troubled by nightmares, occasionally demanding a light, or begging to be allowed to get into his parents' bed. For the last year his sleep had been increasingly disturbed, and he had called almost nightly to come to their bed. Of recent months, he had managed to slip in with them without their waking. Mrs. D. had been unable to take a firm stand about this, as about many things, because his reaction to even minor frustrations had been to cry pitifully, insisting she did not love him.

In the first few years, he had clung to her persistently. She realized that she wasn't encouraging him enough to be independent, that she dressed him and fed him longer than she should have. So she and her husband made a real effort to cultivate more independence. In part, they were successful. He loved nursery school at four and a half, and later was enthusiastic about camp. Although he saw his parents only week-ends, he did not cry when they left as did some of the other children.

Jimmy was always popular with boys his own age and got along well in school, where he loved to talk in front of the class. His stuttering was almost no problem at these times. It was only when he talked with adults that the speech block appeared, especially when he told a long story to his mother.

A few years back, when he begged his mother to get him a brother or sister, she explained to him about a seed being planted in the mother, but that sometimes it may not grow. (They had been unsuccessful in their efforts to conceive again.) He knew, too, that "you must be married to have children," and when he was four, talked of marrying his mother. Although she had been quite prepared to answer any

further questions, he had asked none. But she told of a conversation between them a year or two later, when he had suggested that she swallow some apple seeds and let them grow inside her. She merely responded, "That isn't the way it's done." She and her husband had made it a point to let him be present while both of them were taking showers.

### *Interviews*

The mother had five weekly interviews. She talked quite freely about Jimmy and voiced her concern about his stuttering and his frequent emotional outbursts. From the beginning, she was uneasy about having him come into their bed, as she felt that this was a sign of babyishness that was out of keeping with his age and development. Her feeling about this gave the counselor the opening to suggest sooner than she might otherwise have been able to that the mother find ways to stop it. Using Jimmy's comments about wanting to marry his mother as a springboard, the counselor described something of the normal psychosexual development of the child, pointing out how typically, when he is about four to six years old, he plans to marry the parent of the opposite sex and needs help in accepting the fact that this childish fantasy cannot really be achieved. This is one of the major frustrations of early childhood which every child must face and master in order to be freed for more mature relationships.

Mrs. D., for reasons which had not been determined in this brief contact, had always found it very difficult to frustrate Jimmy, who cried so pitifully when scolded that she usually ended by giving in and reassuring him of her love. She was apprehensive as to how he would react to her taking a firm stand about not coming into his parents' bed. But after the second interview she found it wasn't so hard after all, especially if she sat beside his bed for a time until he fell asleep. In the fourth interview and again in the fifth, she expressed amazement that he had taken it so well and reported that he no longer came to their bed at night. When she followed the counselors' suggestion that she take her showers alone and gradually set up a standard of privacy, the boy accepted this without comment.

With the counselor's help, Mrs. D. began to recognize that Jimmy *had* shown interest in the birth process, expressed, for example, in his remarks about having her swallow apple seeds, and she began to see that children are quick to hide their interest when they sense their parents' reluctance to discuss these matters. After talking over her own hesitation, she

felt better prepared to help Jimmy with some of the misconceptions he may have had and to explain the father's role in a simple, straightforward way. In general, she found that he seemed happier and more relaxed in his whole relationship with his parents. For example, while still spontaneously affectionate, he no longer demanded reassurance of her love. His stuttering completely disappeared for the first time since he began to talk; he could now accept minor frustrations and criticisms without much disturbance.

### *Discussion*

Studies in child psychiatry have made us increasingly aware of the anxiety and guilt that can be roused within the child, especially during this early period of his psychosexual development, if he is not given the strong support he needs in checking his instinctual wishes. This case was selected for publication not because the findings were typical of the stuttering child but rather because the symptomatic behavior, no matter what its origin, seemed modifiable by a superficial change in handling on the part of the mother, thus demonstrating the relief a child may feel at realizing that he can count on his parents to set limits to certain behavior, when it is appropriate to do so. This seven-year-old child knew he should not be coming to his parents' bed at night. He may have sensed that his parents did not want him, and although he was surely not conscious of the strong instinctual drive behind his wish to share their bed, he did know that his behavior was inappropriate for so big a boy, and yet felt powerless to control his impulses alone without his parents' help. Normally, girls and boys go through a stage, at its peak before they go to school, when they more or less unconsciously long for exclusive possession of the parent of the opposite sex, and resent to a greater or less degree having to share him (or her) with the other parent or with brothers and sisters. If children are to grow into emotionally mature men and women, they must be helped to accept this necessary denial of their wishes. Paradoxically, they often feel safer and happier if they can count on their parents to set appropriate limits to what they can do, since they sense that if these wishes were carried out in reality, they would find them frightening and overwhelming.

Another factor that could well have contributed to the intensity of Jimmy's problem was the fact that his father was away from home on business much of his child's fifth year—a critical one in development. Fortunately for Jimmy's ability to accept his role in

*(Continued on page 118)*



# Parents' Questions

The questions published here are selected and discussed by the staff of the Child Study Association, and the answers written by various members. The department is edited by Aline B. Auerbach.

*I have been prepared to answer my six-year-old Nicky's questions about where babies come from, but he has not asked any. Does this mean he is not curious? What should I do?*

MRS. J. L.

All children seem to wonder about these matters during their early years, but the questions may not come in the words you expect—or they may not come in words at all. One 2½-year-old was acting out his concern about the difference in his own and his mother's body when he tried to look under his mother's dress. He was so sharply reprimanded that he felt his questions were dangerous, that grown-ups disapprove and will punish curiosity. The fact that your child is not asking questions does not necessarily mean, however, that you have been prudish or frightening. We do not always know why some children have become too timid to ask. Sometimes they just seem to sense when things are not easy to talk about, without your knowing it.

Bring up the subject yourself when the occasion presents itself. Try gently to find out what he is thinking, with questions perhaps stimulated by a new baby in the neighborhood, or by a trip to the zoo (or a farm) where a new-born animal may provoke discussion. Let him talk, and say what you say in the simplest possible terms, in terms he will understand. Don't push him, but try to create an atmosphere of easy give and take that will leave him free to come back with more questions as they arise.

*My five-year-old daughter keeps asking me what is her little brother's penis, although I have answered the question a dozen times. Does this mean that she hasn't understood the basic information I have given her, or, perhaps, that she hasn't been satisfied by it and needs a fuller explanation?*

MRS. E. T. P.

Your little girl is asking for more than a name when she asks what is her brother's penis. She knows, of course, what it is called, and knows too that she is made differently. Her repeated ques-

tions probably have more to do with her feelings than with facts. Like many other little girls, she may be voicing her basic uncertainty—or even dissatisfaction—with the whole matter of sex differences.

What does she know of the fuller anatomical differences between boys and girls? Surely you can help her understand that girls have organs inside their bodies that are special for girls and women just as a penis is special for boys and men. This knowledge may keep her from feeling that boys have "something" and girls "nothing." She may also need to know that these sex differences are set from the very beginning, and that nothing can happen to change them in any way. This knowledge is important to counteract any idea that she may once have had a penis herself which in some mysterious way was taken away from her. Such notions are not uncommon in children.

Avoid comparisons with her brother which may touch off underlying feelings of jealousy and competition. But more than that, be sure to do what you can to help her enjoy being a girl today and a woman tomorrow. Give her the chance to feel that you and she have many things in common, and that when she grows up she can be a mother, like yourself.

She will need as she develops a fuller explanation of sex in its many other aspects, and if you are alert, you will sense from time to time what's on her mind. This can't be done all at once, of course, but will grow out of sympathetic living together day by day.

*I have never hesitated to tell my children the facts of sex fully and freely so long as what they seemed to want to know was the wholesome, happy side of the matter. But now that they are getting older, the whole thing suddenly seems harder instead of easier. The boys, thirteen and fifteen, occasionally run across the newspapers and magazines that play up everything sordid and cheap. They hear from their friends, too, all sorts of combinations of truth and distortion—then come to me quite simply for explanations.*

MRS. B. W.

There's no more use trying to over-protect our growing children in sex knowledge than in any other respect. The sordid side is a necessary part of their knowledge for it is a true side. You

may argue as did our grandparents that they are "still too young" and that "someday" is time enough. These tactics have never worked with children who get their information and always have got it in their own time, not in ours.

Perhaps more such information is easily available on a larger and wider scale today than it used to be. We may debate both whether this is true and what the results are. But the fact remains that parents still have to help young people understand what is involved in such matters as venereal disease, prostitution, sex crimes, perversion—as facts which should not be evaded just as truly as they help them understand about the fact of normal sex relations and birth.

Perhaps one of your difficulties is an uncertainty about *your* knowledge and *your* reactions to these things. If so, perhaps you need to inform yourself more accurately and think things through more clearly for yourself than you have done heretofore. Then you will have less hesitation in talking to your children quite frankly while at the same time you help them see these matters in a truer perspective.

*Our new television set is creating problems in my home that I don't seem able to cope with. The children sit fascinated for hours watching all sorts of programs, some suitable for them, some not. The five-year-old certainly doesn't understand most of it; the eight-year-old can't be torn away, especially from the cowboy pictures. Even at dinner hour he takes his plate on his lap and eats while he watches. Aside from all the excitement, isn't so much sitting and watching bad for them? And for their eyes, too? What are other parents doing about this problem?*

MRS. R. S.

To answer your last question first, many parents are finding this newest instrument difficult to manage. They will have to work out ways of handling this as they have with movies and radio. The novelty of television makes it unduly fascinating to many children. When this novelty wears off they usually begin to be more selective, to choose the programs they like best. It is here that we can help them. As with radio, they must be helped to budget their time, so that other necessary things will get done—homework, music practice, outdoor play, etc. (They can't do their homework while they watch television as they could while they listened to radio.) They need to be helped also to find out, through some experimentation and some parental guidance, which

programs they want most, and give priority to these for their available time.

The younger ones will find a variety of programs to enjoy on a really childish level—puppets, clowns, animated cartoons, etc. When these programs are over, there should be other things ready for the child to do to draw him away from protracted watching. Older children—even at seven or eight—will probably want more action of the kind they get in the "westerns." For most children a certain amount of such fare will do no harm, and seems to offer a valid outlet, though it is certainly desirable to temper it with less exciting activities, especially before bedtime, and to set some kind of limit on the amount of time to be spent just sitting. Without being arbitrary or abrupt parents can usually win the children's cooperation in this matter of a reasonable amount of viewing.

The question of television's effect on the eyes—adults' or children's—is one on which little is really known. It is suggested by some ophthalmologists that it is wise to sit not too close to the instrument, and not to watch too constantly or in a dark room.

## We Invite Your Comment

The editors of CHILD STUDY need your comments upon the contents of our magazine. For the most helpful answer received to the following questions, we will send free a copy of "We the Parents," by Sidonie M. Gruenberg. Write briefly and explain the reasons for your preferences. Letters must be mailed by October 1, 1949.

1. Which article in this issue have you found most helpful and interesting and why?
2. Which topics have interested you the least and why?
3. What subjects do you wish to see treated in future issues?
4. What regular features—Parents' Questions, Suggestions for Study Groups, Radio, Children's Books, Book Reviews—do you find most useful?

Are you a parent, a professional worker or both?

Address Editors, CHILD STUDY, 132 East 74th Street, New York 21, N. Y.



# Suggestions for Study Groups

This outline is based on the articles in this issue and is offered as a guide to readers who wish to use CHILD STUDY as source material for group study and discussion. The department is edited by Margaret Meigs.

## BACKGROUND FOR DISCUSSION:

Excellent source material is available to the group leader for the discussion of sex education. In addition to the books recommended in the article "Current Trends in Books in Sex Education" and the films discussed in "Sex Education Today," there are a number of helpful and inexpensive pamphlets which can be obtained for distribution. Several of these will be listed below.

Although, as Mrs. Auerbach reminds us, the leader must always be on the alert to evaluate critically the material he turns to, his biggest problem lies in the adaptation of this material to the needs and interests of his group. It is not always easy to determine in advance a group's general background and readiness for discussion of this topic. The chances are that when the request for this meeting comes spontaneously from the majority of the members, the group is ready for a more advanced discussion. If, however, the leader has been urged to take up the topic of sex education by a small delegation, or by some outside source, such as the school principal or the PTA chairman, the indication is for a more general and slower approach.

In any group, however, we may expect a considerable difference among the members in readiness for handling the discussion. And the leader needs to keep in mind that the members will carry away from it, as Lawrence K. Frank put it, "not what you said, but what he heard."

In no case is this quotation more true than in the discussion of sex education. Several of the authors in this issue of CHILD STUDY point out that information about sex can be understood and absorbed by a child only in terms of his intellectual and emotional level of readiness. This is just as true of adults. Understanding at the adult level is often complicated by gaps and misconceptions of which a grown-up may be unaware or too embarrassed to display his ignorance. Militating against his ability to make use of the most carefully prepared material may be the very resistances which have drawn him to the meeting.

It is well to remember, too, as noted in Mrs. Auerbach's review of *Ethics of Sex Conduct*, that we do not have today any simple universally accepted code of sex morals. What may seem easily acceptable to one parent may seem distasteful to another. The leader needs to help each member meet these differences in attitude with understanding, that he may, in his increased tolerance of others, accept more easily his children and himself.

Perhaps the most basic point to make in any discussion of sex education, stressed in this issue especially by Mrs. Gruenberg, is the one that sex education is not an isolated subject but is a part of a person's total education and feeling about life. It is not the words that count, not the special information, not the projects or the planned opportunities, so much as the freeing of the individual through the liberating experience of growing up in a family of

comfortable, loving and responsible people, to accept these facts and feelings about himself and his kind. In the broad and various ways in which different individuals and families express this wholesomeness of spirit lies the key to the adjustment between the too much and the too little in the practices of sex education.

## TO DISCUSS:

A parent says "My ten-year-old has never shown any interest at all in asking questions about sex." Discuss different ways in which this situation can be interpreted and met. Does your group agree with the answer to this problem in the Parents' Questions on page 107?

A mother says "I could never bring myself to talk about sex with my child." Discuss how she can be shown to have already made a simple beginning in her dealings with her child which she can build on.

Discuss projects in sex education suitable for the school to undertake. What would be the objective of these projects at various levels from nursery school to high school? What preparation and follow-up should be appropriately expected of the home for school projects?

What significance can be attached under various circumstances to a child's use of obscene language?

Discuss the factors that led to the problem and its probable solution in the "Case of Jimmy."

## RECOMMENDED LOW-COST PAMPHLETS (available from the publishers):

*Boy Meets Girl in Wartime.* American Social Hygiene Association, Inc. 1790 Broadway, New York City. \$.10

*How Can We Teach About Sex?* Benjamin C. Gruenberg. Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 122, 22 East 38th Street, New York City. \$.20

*The Technique of Sex Information.* Fritz Redl. Child Study Association. \$.15

*What Makes a Good Home? The Beginnings of Emotional Health.* Child Study Association. \$.20

*When Children Ask About Sex.* Child Study Assn. \$.35

*How to Tell Your Child About Sex.* James L. Hymes, Jr. Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 149. \$.20



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# Looking at the Comics—1949

A Survey by the Children's Book Committee of the Child Study Association

ANYONE who is concerned with children and their reading must, at some point, consider the problem of the comics. No matter what else they read, or whether they read anything else at all, most children in America read comics.

Many parents have watched with misgivings, and some bewilderment, the growth of this reading among boys and girls of all ages and all levels of intelligence and economic background. They have feared the inroads of this kind of "picture-reading" on their children's ability and desire to read more challenging books, its effects on the development of their tastes and appreciation of literature and art. They have deplored the low level of vulgarity and sensationalism to which some of the so-called "comics" magazines have resorted for their appeal. They are concerned about the possible effects on impressionable youngsters of so much pictured violence.

There are no ready answers to their questioning, since definitive studies of the effects of this reading are lacking. Perhaps, in the absence of such studies, each of us will have to be guided by what we know of our own children's needs and interests, and an understanding of what their comics reading offers them. We will have to be guided, too, by our knowledge of the comics. What is *in* these magazines our children are reading, and about which there has been so much controversy?

In the hope of providing an answer to this last question, the Children's Book Committee of the Child Study Association some years ago surveyed about a hundred comics magazines and published in *CHILD STUDY* (Summer, 1943) a critique of these for the guidance of parents and others working with children. The enormous growth of these publications in the years since then has prompted a re-survey which reveals some important changes, not only in their quantity but in the kinds of material that are being offered in picture-strip magazines.

Many requests have been received from parents and teachers for a list of "approved" comics. The Committee found, however, that to prepare any such list would present almost insurmountable problems. Aside from the difficulty of arriving at any precise criteria covering such a wide variety of material as these magazines present, we found that rapid changes take place in this publishing field, and the ephemeral

nature of many of its titles had to be considered. The Committee has, therefore, attempted to work out a sort of blueprint which may help parents and others to find their way around in the maze of magazines on the newsstands, and to suggest some criteria by which they may set up their own standards and guide children in their selection. For it is the children's selectivity which must, in the long run, determine the standards of the material that is published for them.

During the past year the Committee has examined 213 of about 360 comics magazines currently published. Even the most casual observation reveals at once wide differences in their editorial policy and make-up. They range from extremes of good comics drawing and satisfying color work and page layout to the most unsightly scrambled pages and hideous pictures. The stories also range from some that are original and sprightly through much that is merely trite and stereotyped down to the crude and banal or downright vicious and sadistic.

The Committee has noted some welcome changes over the years. Some of the magazines examined in the earlier survey have made evident efforts to improve their general appearance—layout, coloring and especially lettering. There have been a few excellent new magazines for younger readers, presenting folk tales and amusing animal characters.

The most regrettable change since the earlier survey has been the increased number of these magazines dealing with "real" crime, and those featuring sexually suggestive and sadistic pictures. These are presumably not addressed to children—are perhaps not even attractive to many of them. Nevertheless they are available at ten cents for young people to purchase, and are prominently displayed on newsstands. Some of these are about as uncouth and savage pictures and stories as can be found anywhere. Any kind of decent self-censorship on the part of their publishers and handlers should have ruled them off the stands long ago, along with their counterparts in sexy candid-picture periodicals.

Among recent developments, too, have been an increasing number of Westerns, some very good, in the best tradition of our cowboy saga, some of poor quality and questionable taste, with overemphasis (for younger readers, certainly) on sex interest. Another new growth is the large crop of teen-age comics,



mostly of the humorous variety, on jitterbug themes. A few of these are both funny and warm-hearted in their lampooning of teen-age fads and foibles. Others are so caricatured that the youngsters themselves often resent them, with such remarks as "I hope people don't think teen-agers behave like *that!*"

As in its earlier survey, the Committee found it difficult to classify comics magazines by subject or type, since within one cover a magazine often offers a variety of stories featuring adventure, fantasy, nonsense, magic, crime, sports, history and science. This effort to cover a wide reader interest in each issue also complicates the problem of age levels. Stories perfectly suitable for younger readers are often sandwiched between two which certainly are not. Some comics magazines, however, are definitely geared for certain age groups, and this is made obvious and consistent in their covers, pictures and contents.

Of the 213 titles examined the Committee found 80 which it classified as "good." Of this number about half seemed to the Committee to warrant the designation of "very good." Of the rest, 42 were classified as "acceptable," 34 "poor," and 57 definitely "undesirable" or worse.

The criteria by which the Committee made these classifications were necessarily arbitrary, since there are no generally accepted standards for this kind of pictorial storytelling. Certainly comics can't be measured by the same criteria we apply to other forms of art or literature. Comics have taken a place among the language arts, yet they have a form and appeal all their own. It would seem that this new medium of communication must make its own standards, with special reference to young readers' needs.

What is a "good" comic? The answer to this question may differ somewhat for different children and at different age levels. Yet even allowing for differences of taste and interest, the Committee believes there are certain basic essentials to look for in all comics magazines, certain earmarks by which to recognize good comics publications and to guide the children toward discriminating choices. Roughly, these might be summed up as follows:

**COVER**—The cover picture should be clean-cut, uncluttered and not overly sensational. Both the picture and the title should honestly represent, not misrepresent, the stories to be found within. It is unfair to use the cover as a promise that is not fulfilled by the contents. Furthermore, the cover should, by its make-up, indicate the age to which it is addressed.

**MAKE-UP**—Pictures should be clear and well-

drawn, within the concepts of comics art. Colors should be well-combined and clear—not smudged, muddled or run together. Layout of the picture-strips should be in an orderly arrangement, well-spaced and large enough for their details to be seen with ease. Lettering, both in the "balloons" and in the running heads, should be large and legible, preferably upright, with adequate space between the lines, and printed always on white or light-colored background. The use of more white space on the page makes for easier reading. It goes without saying that female characters should be adequately clothed in accord with current social usage, and not presented in suggestive situations or poses.

**STORY CONTENT**—Stories should be plausibly motivated and valid, if they deal with reality, imaginative if they deal with fantasy. Facts and backgrounds, whether historical, geographic or scientific, should be correct and authentic. Action and suspense seem to be essential, but it is best if the suspense is resolved satisfactorily in the same issue (not "to be continued next month"). The hero's actions and motivation should be always above reproach and always within the law; the villains always reap as they have sown. The treatment of crime should be honest and not glamorized, and easy lawbreaking, such as shoplifting, pickpocketing, etc., are best omitted. Scenes of brutality and bloodshed are certainly not suitable for children's reading.

Where written stories are included in the magazine the same standards should apply. Content and style should be suitable for the reading age to which the magazine is principally addressed. These brief stories may well serve the function of stimulating the young reader's interest in reading.

**SOCIAL ATTITUDES** — Relationships between people should be sound and human, especially family relationships. Stereotypes should be avoided, especially those of minority groups. The ideology of "good" characters and of the plot should carry a sense of social responsibility—respect for constituted authority, democratic principles of living, ethical and moral concepts of behavior.

Inviting reader participation in the form of letters or questions is sound magazine practice, but where such questions are answered by advice, as in some of the teen-age magazines, this should be done with the utmost care by a skilled and trained counselor. Unskilled advising of this kind may be exceedingly dangerous.

Indoctrination or propaganda will be found in

comics as in any other form of communication in a free press. It is important to help our children recognize it there as elsewhere, and develop their own critical attitudes and judgment. The intent of comic strips for indoctrination should be honest and overt.

**HUMOR**—Slapstick action, ludicrous, farfetched situations and nonsensical language are all part of children's humor, hence the appeal of these comics. The humor may be crude or "corny." It should not be cruel. The lampooning of human misadventures and follies is a natural for comics humor, but it should not be at the expense of any group. Physical handicaps or disabilities should never be the subject of ridicule. Substitution of animal characters with human traits often serves to soften the caricature. Most comics humor is obvious; some is superbly subtle; only occasionally is it vulgar, and then in terms probably not recognized by young readers.

**LANGUAGE**—The comics have developed a language of their own, especially in "sound effects" denoting surprise, rage, pain, etc. These seem to be inherent in the comics technique. The use of the vernacular, dropped endings, slang, gangster terminology and the like are probably a part of their charm for children, and harmless enough for those who are exposed to good English at home and at school. Where the language is in character, it should be consistent and authentic. Where the hero or other people speak standard English it should, of course, be correct in grammar and usage. It should be in keeping, too, with the age of the readers to whom it is addressed. (In a single magazine one may find language ranging from "hot money" to "spurious currency"!)

**ADVERTISING**—Suitability of the advertising in comics magazines depends somewhat upon the age of the readers to whom they are addressed. Advertisements of razors, wallets and so on will hardly be interesting to children. Unfortunately, deceptive claims for skin cures and other aids to "attractiveness"—for both male and female—are apt to appeal to adolescents and are totally misleading. These should not be accepted in teen-age magazines, nor should suggestive advertisements of bras and other "allure" apparel. Advertisements adjuring boys to make themselves big and strong—and hence more successful with girls—are equally deceptive and may be emotionally disturbing to boys who happen to be small and slender. Advertising firearms in these magazines should be out of the question; advertising of guns for play should be accepted only if they are perfectly harmless or adequately safeguarded. Since

many localities prohibit the sale of firecrackers these would seem also to be unsuitable for advertising in a magazine of national circulation. Such advertisements as breakfast foods, bicycles, sports accessories and cameras are perfectly suitable and often enhance the usefulness of the magazine, especially since some of these are skillfully integrated in the comic-strip technique. Offers of premiums or prizes for selling certain items is legitimate provided the merchandise to be sold is honest value and the prizes and premiums are as represented. The thrill children get from "writing in" can be turned to disappointment if their "business venture" turns out to be only a racket!

\* \* \*

These, then, are some of the things children can be taught to look for, guideposts through which they may be helped to grow in appreciation and judgment. Children differ in their tastes and reading needs, as adults do, and these differences must be considered in commending one or another comic to their attention. Interests change, too, with age. Younger children seem to prefer the "milder" antics of the cartooned animals, like *Donald Duck* and *Bugs Bunny*, or such lively animations as *Looney Tunes*. Older children read these, too, though many go on to fantastic adventures of the *Superman* type, the Westerns and crime and detective comics of the *Dick Tracy* variety. At all ages, however, children seem to like the funny ones, like *Popeye* and *Blondie*. Young teen-agers are readers of such magazines as *Date with Judy* and *Archie Andrews*. Not until they reach high school age are they apt to enjoy the more subtle and adult themes of *Li'l Abner* and *Terry and the Pirates*.

This report has confined itself to an investigation and evaluation of comics magazines. It has not attempted to discuss questions arising from children's reading of comics: their values and dangers, their possible effects—harmful or helpful—their inroads on other activities, the problem of quantity and intensity of comics reading and suggestions for their use as a springboard to other reading and widening interests. All these questions were discussed somewhat fully in two earlier surveys in *CHILD STUDY*: "Looking at the Comics," and "Chills and Thrills in Radio, Movies and Comics—Some Psychiatric Opinion". Reprints of these are available at 25 cents each. Discussion of these aspects may be found also in a current pamphlet, "Comics, Radio, Movies—and Children," by Josette Frank (Publication No. 148 of the Public Affairs Committee, 20 cents).

The comics have, it seems, developed to meet some  
(Continued on page 124)



## Book Reviews

**Mirror for Man: The Relation of Anthropology to Modern Life.** By Clyde Kluckhohn. *Whittlesey House, New York, 1949.* 313 pp. \$3.75.

Although the wise have always counselled man "Know thyself," it is only in recent times that systematic efforts have been made to construct a suitable mirror for this purpose through scientific study of human-beings in their various cultures. Clyde Kluckhohn, Professor of Anthropology at Harvard University, suggests that since becoming a member of society makes practically everyone "culture bound" in his outlooks, we are no more able to know ourselves or to understand the strange folks who populate most of the world than a fish is to discover the water in which he swims.

Becoming socialized demands of the individual that he restrain spontaneous impulses and curb his desires. Every culture develops its own system of rewards and penalties or of promises and threats for making its children conform and grow up into decent adults. The motivations and inducements for becoming acceptable members of the group involve substitute or symbolic values for the inevitable sacrifices and losses. But these peculiar symbols for virtually universal values keep us "culture bound" and "block all rational efforts to bring about harmony and unity in personal, social and international relations."

Those who understand one another can communicate with grunts, simple gestures and shrugs, a nod of the head. Strangers cannot understand these expressions—may indeed understand them as meaning something quite different. And even "learning the language" of those strangers will not solve the problem. Why will Hindus starve themselves and their children rather than drink milk from cows? Or why would Belgians go hungry rather than eat the American corn—which is food for beasts? The chapter "Anthropologists at Work" is a fascinating sampling of important uses made of anthropological knowledge and insights by civilian and military administrators in dealing with "natives" of different backgrounds. Incidentally, it reminds us of the immeasurable sufferings and futile wars that arose inevitably from the efforts of men to move into the lands of others, to wrest for themselves space and resources occupied by people of different races, different cultures. It is useless to regret that missionaries and imperialists and bearers of the torch of civilization did not call upon anthropologists before they had done their worst; it

is important for everybody in these times of rapid movement, instant communication and increasing interdependence to recognize that we shall not be able to impose our ideas of the most perfect way of life upon the resistant devotees of strange symbols.

Much of this book is especially relevant for men and women who are concerned with what happens to their own children or who feel responsible for guiding and training other people's children. Readers interested in child rearing and education generally will find illumination in the chapters "Personality in Culture" and "An Anthropologist Looks at the United States." Familiar but unanswered questions constantly reappear: Can you change human nature, for example? Do the personality types that distinguish various nations or societies result from heredity or from environment? Should we try to improve man's lot by educating or reconverting individuals or by repairing our political and economic machinery?

The book is addressed to the layman and is quite intelligible without specialized academic preparation. It does not, however, furnish categorical answers to the issues that plague us. It is valuable because it helps us to understand the sources of many present-day difficulties or the obstacles to making direct adjustments. Readers will recognize the inadequacy of many atomistic "experiments" that isolate the problems they seek to answer from their emotional and social settings. Nearly every parent must have felt resentment or frustration or confusion when experts failed to agree.

We have been demanding absolute answers to such questions as scheduled feeding versus "self-demand"; rewards and punishments; freedom versus discipline; how to overcome (or prevent, or cultivate) group prejudices and hostilities; overprotection of children versus just enough wholesome neglect. In these days of anxiety and terrifying rumblings from arsenals and diplomatic conferences, we want to know how to nip aggression in the bud without waiting to ask what would take its place—if we could succeed.

Another source of confusion is a certain form of eclecticism which seeks to build up a pattern of life by selecting fragments from various other cultures. The individual's wish to satisfy his impulses and be at the same time acceptable to his society cannot be met by adopting the sexual freedoms of a "primitive" society with the competitive egalitarianism of ours. The usages of any ancient or remote culture that

happen to please us do not fit our scheme of goals and values. Even within our own history, Professor Kluckhohn points out, there are incongruities resulting from the persistence of emotional fixations under changing conditions. Modes of response essential to pioneering are inadequate under present-day conditions; "to some considerable degree, frontier virtues are intolerable vices in contemporary America."

Hard as it is to understand people with strange religions and strange moralities, it should be helpful to recognize that the cultures developed through the centuries in all parts of the world include certain conventional—but not necessarily arbitrary—values that are in each case sufficiently potent to drive people to the utmost exertions, to utmost brutalities and to the ultimate sacrifices, too. Very much like our own system, which the author speaks of as being a "prestige economy . . . to a pathological extent."

BENJAMIN C. GRUENBERG

*Parent and Child.* By Catherine Mackenzie. William Sloane Associates, Inc., New York, 1949. 341 pp. \$2.95.

Many parents will welcome this book because it so exactly suits their need for sound and carefully selected material in a readily accessible form and in one place.

But even though the material of this book is culled from the work of Catherine Mackenzie in the *New York Times*, top reporter in the field of child study, it is much more than an album of clippings. For more than a decade Miss Mackenzie has covered most of the important conferences and lectures on the subject, she has interviewed most of the people who have contributed to our thinking about parents and children and families, and has reviewed the important books and pamphlets in the field. The author's technical skill in knowing what and how to report is matched by her intelligent insight and sympathetic understanding of the difficulties encountered by both parents and children in living and growing together.

The sound underlying philosophy of the book will assure its usefulness for a long time to come. Completely up to date, it is nevertheless undated because of the author's constant implication that implicit in modern discovery and terminology are things that some men and women with the right feelings about people have always known to be true. It is a remarkable accomplishment to have attained this readable, non-technical style without writing down to any group or oversimplifying any fundamental aspect of the material. The book is human and sometimes humorous but it never evades the reality nor the

seriousness of the need for help and reassurance. It could only have been produced out of a rich and varied experience throughout a long period of contact with the best thought and practice in its area. Beautifully arranged and printed, it reads as easily as a story, with careful documentation, reference and reading list and index supplied by an appendix. It is recommended for everyone. The experienced and scholarly or the quite unenlightened, all will find here practical help and inspiration toward better human relationships.

MARTHA ROSS LEIGH

*Adolescent Character and Personality.* By Robert J. Havighurst and Hilda Taba. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1949. 315 pp. \$4.00.

When a number of scientists of a great university, representing all departments relating to the development of children and adults, collaborate in a study of adolescence, we may expect a really impressive report. The Committee on Human Development of the University of Chicago, composed of members from nine different departments, has provided us with a wealth of information, given meaning by the central question: "To what extent is character development influenced by the social environment of the individual and to what extent by his personal make-up?" The answers, psychoanalytically oriented but emphasizing the social context, constitute a valuable contribution to our knowledge about the impact of the community on adolescents.

The report was based on a study of all sixteen-year-olds in a small, midwestern town, called, for the purpose of this project, Prairie City. The investigators made use of the widest possible variety of data, including standard tests in all areas, and a large number of individual evaluations made both by age mates and by interested adults—teachers, group leaders, relatives, school principal and Sunday school teachers. The large number of tests used, and of individuals involved, both as subjects and as evaluators, together with the strict adherence to experimental methods by the workers, would seem to insure a high degree of accuracy in the results.

On the basis of data obtained the subjects were classified according to social status (precisely defined in terms of "Upper," "Lower Upper," "Upper Middle," etc.) and personality types, into which they seemed to fall naturally. Five types were named: Self-directive, Adaptive, Submissive, Defiant and Unadjusted. Partly as a check on the group results, and partly as a basis for further study, intensive individual analyses were made of nineteen of the subjects, by



means of personal interviews and tests, notably the Rorschach.

The results obtained seemed to justify certain conclusions, which may be summarized as follows: Good social adjustment contributes to good character; any young person who experiences success and security in home and school is likely to abide by the accepted code of morality. Personal characteristics which favor the development of good moral character are, first, intelligent understanding of moral principles and second, a conviction that these principles are worth sacrifice. "Only such a person can become a moral leader; how such persons can be discovered and how produced in greater numbers is a major problem for research in character formation." One chapter gives well considered and workable recommendations for making the community a "better breeding ground for good character among its young people."

The value of this book lies largely in its demonstration of the important part played by culture and social environment in personality development.

*Adolescent Character and Personality* will, of course, be of great interest to professional workers in the field of human development. The layman interested in teen-agers and their community relationships will also find here much that is rewarding and challenging. The style is simple and colloquial and as free as possible from scientific terminology. For such laymen there may also be social value in the opportunity to learn in this age of popular interest in social studies just what is meant by "scientific method."

FRANCES H. JAMEISON

**The Happy Home: A Guide to Family Living.** By Agnes Benedict and Adele Franklin. Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc. New York, 1948. 304 pp. \$2.75.

This is primarily a book on group experience as a growth medium in family life, a rediscovery of the fun and the value of doing things together as a family. Although it is not in any sense a psychological treatise on home and family, knowledge of the psychology of child and parent is implicit throughout. Without treating specific routines and their management, it offers a general philosophy for the home which helps in understanding the meaning of good routine and happy management.

The authors have a deep faith in the ability of children to grow, to create, to become fully developed human beings, if they are given both freedom and guidance in the expression of their needs. The rights of parents, however, are honestly stated and defended.

This balance between providing essential freedom for children and accepting fully the needs of parents and other adults in the family, with all members learning to consider the rights and well-being of the group, is one of the book's most refreshing contributions.

The first three sections, "Living Together," "Widening Horizons," and "Development Through Creation" are stimulating and full of information about things to do, ideas to explore, experiences to share. Family chores, holidays, parties, friends, excursions, getting along together, all the richness and variety of family living at its creative best, are treated in a practical and understanding way. The use of the arts and crafts, drama and music, in school, home and community is discussed as a common experience that can enrich the family and its individual members.

Part four, "Physical and Emotional Growth," deals with general aspects of problems in personal and individual development. The authors discuss briefly the interrelation of mind and body in psychosomatic illness, in conflicts, and in maladjustment. As far as it goes, this discussion is sound, although the treatment of the subject is not on a deep level. The authors are interested not to explore emotional complications and inner conflicts but, by opening this whole area to the reader's thinking, to increase parents' awareness of the significance of sound emotional development for all the family. Out of long experience with children, the authors offer some excellent advice and sound insights about what children need in order to get the most out of family sports, excursions and vacations.

In these days when we are learning to recognize the need for warmth, security and shared experiences within the family and in the community, parents will reach eagerly for *The Happy Home*.

MARY KAVANAUGH JONES

**A Baby Is Born: The Story of How Life Begins.** By Milton I. Levine, M.D., and Jean H. Seligmann. Simon & Schuster, 1949. 54 pp. \$1.50.

This attractive little book by a pediatrician and his wife is a welcome addition to the growing library of sex education books for children. Although there is no indication in the book itself of the age of the children the authors had in mind, a statement on the jacket says that it was planned for children from six to ten, an age for which, up to now, there has been little suitable material. This, then, serves as an introduction or as preparation for the authors' earlier book, *The Wonder of Life*, which has been widely used with and by older girls and boys.

In *A Baby Is Born* the contents are wisely limited to the essential facts of reproduction and birth, but each part of this broad subject is presented thoroughly in words that children can understand. The style is so simple that it does not lead one to expect the complete and thoughtful content the book offers. The format is also misleading, for the size of the type and the childish level of the illustrations, charming as they are, may cause the reader to think that it is written for even younger children, for whom the content might well be too detailed. The use of some of the diagrams is also open to question for children of this age.

One wishes that there had been included some discussion of how books like this can best be used, possibly as a preface for parents and teachers who, after all, will be the ones who will buy the book. Shall this material be turned over to children to read—perhaps with a sense of relief by those parents who feel unable to cope with the problem themselves and therefore are glad to find a book that will do the job for them? In some home situations, this will undoubtedly be the case, and the children will profit by the experience, for reading this book will be somewhat like hearing a talk by a kindly, understanding grownup who is aware of what children in general need in the way of sex guidance. But cannot this book also be read by parents *with* their children or discussed together, in those cases where the children prefer to read for themselves? In this way it can become one tool in the larger process of sex education, offering material which parent and child can use together, either in part or whole as the needs of the child require, and which becomes absorbed into the background of the child's understanding as he grows.

This book is ideal if it is used in this way. And it is ideal too for parents themselves, for it gives them an interpretation not only of the facts of sex and reproduction, in words that they can use with their children, but it places these facts in a framework of satisfying human relationships in a way that makes it easy for them to pass this also on to their children. The illustrations contribute largely to this warm, friendly atmosphere and in several places extend the message of the book. One, for example, shows a father feeding his young child with a spoon, demonstrating without any preaching how fathers too play their part in the care of their children. The curve of the father's protecting arm and the look on his face suggest the deeper relationships that are implicit throughout the book.

ALINE B. AUERBACH

## SEX EDUCATION TODAY

(Continued from page 100)

that. But its implications as to parent-child relationships are unsound, for it does not suggest the possibility that imparting information and guiding children through their growth and development may be a satisfying privilege as well as a responsibility. Furthermore, fathers and mothers do not have to be as letter-perfect as a film or a book. They can learn along with their children, in a continuous process.

When this film was shown to a group of parents, they were quite uncritical in their acceptance of it, for the picture presented their own problem; they could identify themselves with this embarrassed father. And they were delighted with this wonderful new device which would do this difficult job for them. When it was shown to a class of young girls, the leader gave no indication that she would welcome any questions which might have a deeper significance for the growing children than the details of bodily structure and function. Where such a film is used with older adolescents as a substitute for personal help and guidance, it is not likely to evoke any real questions.

The second film, designed for use in schools, emphasizes group discussion to accompany the presentation of facts. It starts in the family circle and carries into the classroom questions raised at home and other questions which children want cleared up. The usual teacher-pupil exchange takes place in the familiar schoolroom setting. The atmosphere is warm and friendly. It allows for the natural shyness and self-consciousness of the young people. The film shows the special value of the school in helping the child to identify himself with a group that has similar problems. In this way the school supplements the sex education that belongs basically to the home and also serves to socialize the members of the group.

Looking at this film one can see how meaningless it is to argue whether sex education "belongs" in the home or in the school. The child's basic attitudes, which are established in the home, come with him to school, where he "learns" to expand his understanding and sympathies and goals, as a member of the larger group. Each institution or agency has its special role to play, but they are all interrelated.

Even such a good film as this, however, cannot be a substitute for personal concern with children or for understanding each individual's needs. The showing of sex education films by teachers who know only the words and not the music, so to speak, defeats the purpose for which these films are made.



In our zeal to be modern and to give our children what they need, we have to make sure that the person who meets with the children knows how to invite from them their questions, their problems. Films, like books, can be useful in sex education only if we use them to stimulate discussion, to free children to ask questions and to suggest that we stand ready to answer them.

Today we are more aware of our problems, and also of our resources. We want to use all our skills to help boys and girls to develop a wholesome and positive understanding of sex as an essential component of life. We want their attitudes toward sex to enable them both to express their sexuality and to control it.

Today sex education is widely recognized to be a part of character education, being concerned with building up responsible relationships with others, especially responsible relationships of two adults who have learned to care for each other and to identify their interest toward common goals. Sex education includes all efforts toward developing such attitudes and responsibilities. Information is part of this education but cannot be acquired in isolation from the larger purposes.

Our efforts for sex education are becoming increasingly effective as a generation of young people, more intelligently and understandingly guided than their parents, has been growing up and going forward with assurance and confidence.

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### CURRENT TRENDS

(Continued from page 102)

Bibliography Committee of the Child Study Association has selected three to recommend. None of them is perfect, but they are important, partly in their own right and partly because they represent significant trends.

The first is a true parent education book, since it deals "with the problems of parents in providing sex education for their children." It is "Let's Tell the Truth About Sex," by Howard Whitman (*Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1948*), not an educator but a writer on social problems. His book is a good job of objective reporting, bringing together the opinions and findings of many experts. But what has come out is a thoughtful and balanced picture of sex education, step by step, from birth through marriage. It is easy to read, unpretentious, oversimplified, too, in places, yet it covers many subtle and controversial issues.

The second is a little book called "Ethics in Sex Conduct: A Manual on Youth, Sex and Marriage,"

by Professor Clarence Leuba of Antioch College (*Association Press, 1948*), "designed to assist young people in developing standards of conduct for themselves in the sexual area." What makes this book an unusual contribution is its honest discussion of the dilemma of young people today in a society which allows them great freedom but at the same time postpones marriage and frowns on premarital sex experience. Aware that we are in a state of transition, he discusses the pros and cons of premarital relationships with frankness and honesty, in terms of psychological, emotional and social values. And he recognizes the possibility that under the proper favorable social and personal circumstances (which he stresses are difficult to maintain), sex relations may occur before marriage as part of a responsible human relationship, based on deep feeling and mutual consideration.

His conclusions? "We have not attempted a categorical answer to the question: 'Should Sexual Intercourse Be Confined to Marriage?' Instead we have described (1) the personal and social conditions under which intercourse can be advantageously and successfully limited to marriage, and (2) the conditions under which it may possibly be practiced satisfactorily premaritally. Each individual has to decide for himself what set of conditions is most fully present in his particular personality and environment."

The third book moves forward in another direction. It is "Modern Pattern for Marriage," by Dr. Walter R. Stokes (*Rinehart, 1948*) primarily intended as a guide to young people preparing for marriage, but also designed to aid parents who wish to help their children arrive at sound concepts of sex and marriage. In its 110 pages of actual content it covers much ground. And because it is so compressed, there are many summary statements that need elaborating, and some minor points with which one might disagree. Behind a clipped style, however, it is a straightforward approach to problems of marriage adjustment, recognizing the need for emotional maturity as a factor for successful marriage, and posing some important questions as to changing patterns of marriage in our rapidly changing world. But its outstanding contribution is the author's conviction as expressed in the following paragraph:

"The only sound motive for happy marriage is being overwhelmingly in love on a frankly sexual basis, centering around physical desire. There is much more to a good marriage than this but always it should be the solid foundation. It provides satisfactions that make marriage seem a happy way of life. From it flow motives of good feeling that overcome most

marital problems." And further in the same paragraph: "When children appear, a sexually well-adjusted couple make the best parents because they possess more kindness, less hostility; because their satisfaction in each other provides a balanced emotional attitude toward children; and because they can gracefully allow their children to grow up and in due time leave the family to live their own independent adult lives."

These three books are an interesting commentary on sex education at the beginning of 1949. Each in its own way attempts to interpret sex needs and sex behavior in terms of the whole personality, and is aware to a greater or less extent of the influence of our culture, with all its diversification. And each attempts to integrate the three stages of sex education, subordinating the intellectual approach to the essential emotional needs of children and adults, and working toward a sound morality or ethics which attempt to develop personal gratifications within the larger framework of deep interpersonal relationships.

We are still very much in transition, groping for further help in this complex field of human behavior. We need more information and more interpretation. And we have a right to ask that the material that is offered should be sound and well-considered, even though it may be written at many educational levels and in many different ways.

Beyond that, there is a responsibility for us as parents and professional workers to be thoughtful and critical in a constructive sense, not accepting everything just because it appears in print, but developing criteria for ourselves, as we become increasingly aware of the needs of children, step by step, on this whole path of growing up.

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## THE CASE OF JIMMY

*(Continued from page 106)*

the family, Mr. D. is a strong, kindly, understanding husband and father who is able to give Jimmy the male companionship he needs in order to help him accept his father as the male head of the household, to be imitated and admired. In another respect, the D.'s, with the best of intentions, may have unwittingly added to Jimmy's tension. Like so many educated, progressive parents today, they sincerely believed, when they allowed Jimmy to be present while they were bathing and dressing, that they were helping him to develop a wholesome, uninhibited attitude toward sex, and they would have pooh-poohed any other practice as old-fashioned. Yet we now have

reason to believe that the instinctive modesty shown by the parents of a generation or more ago had some validity. As a child grows out of babyhood, the sight of his parents in the nude may be stimulating and disturbing—more so than the more casual interest he shows in other children at the nursery age. It is very possible that Jimmy will become less demanding and less dependent on his mother as he is protected from the impact of these situations.

An important factor we do not wish to minimize in estimating the reasons behind the disappearance of Jimmy's symptoms is the recognition that improvement had already begun before Mrs. D. came to our service. She had sensed Jimmy's need for more independence and already her tendency to be overanxious and overprotective had lessened. His ready acceptance and apparent enjoyment of both nursery school and camp suggested that Jimmy felt quite secure in his parents' love; physical separation was less threatening to him than to a less secure child.

Mrs. D. had been able to help Jimmy this far but she needed additional help, first in understanding some of the deeper motivations of the boy's behavior and also in strengthening his inner security by setting limits for him within which he feels safe. That the mother was able to progress so rapidly toward both of these goals suggested that she was ready to accept the interpretation and the help offered through the counseling interviews. In addition, however, her relationship to an objective but friendly counselor gave her the support she needed to assume a new attitude of responsibility and control of her boy which up to this point she had not been able to achieve.

Both the counselor and the mother were aware that they had not penetrated the deeper sources of the mother's own attitudes. Since it appeared, however, that Jimmy's symptoms which had caused her concern were disappearing, and that he was making a satisfactory adjustment in so many areas, it did not appear justified to probe more deeply at this time, especially in view of the basic strengths in this boy and his family.

The mother agreed to keep in close touch with the counselor, however, since they both agreed that it was premature to interpret the present improvement as cure, especially since he had already shown only temporary improvement in the past. Mrs. D. stressed, however, that she had never known him to be so happy and at peace with himself.

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# Children's Books

## For a Quarter or Less

THE joy of having a book for one's very own can be experienced by more children today than ever before. Even in these days of high prices, a quarter, or occasionally a dime, will buy a real book. It may be an old favorite or a brand new story. The advantages of low cost and ready availability of books are numerous. The drawbacks are few but, alas, must also be counted.

First on the list of plus values is the pride of ownership. Even for the young child there is something special about a book that is not borrowed from the library or from a friend: it may be looked at or read whenever fancy strikes; it may be taken to bed, or to school, or on a visit; it may be loaned to a neighbor or to the classroom library. To be able to share and yet to know that the book is really one's own gives double pleasure. And this low cost has another value. It makes the book habit easy to acquire. Now twenty-five cent books make it possible for school-age children to indulge in book-buying without too much damage to allowances. Saving up for a book or even earning enough for it is not at all difficult now, and this, too, has its own reward.

We parents, so lavish with toys, so willing to invest in breakable, destructible, even disintegrating playthings, are prone to feel a tinge of horror when a book is torn or crayoned or even loved to death. But even the most bibliophilic adult can learn to accept the occasional mutilation of a book that costs so little.

All this treasure, however, is not pure gold. A gaily colored jacket and an inviting price may lead us into mistakes which are costly in other than financial respects. Some of the illustrations in these books are crude and ugly. If we want to help our children grow into a love of beautiful things, then even the littlest picture books should be selected with discrimination. Perhaps we cannot expect the printing and color reproductions to be quite as fine here as in more expensive volumes, yet the standards we set should not be relaxed because "it's only a quarter." Poor story material, or tales that are frightening or that attempt to point a heavy-handed moral, as in *Randolph: The Bear Who Said No*, have no more place here than they do in two-dollar books. Stories that are poorly told, dull or pointless are not good at any price. Mentioned below are a number of good buys, most of them available in five-and-ten stores or local stationery stores as well as in bookshops.

Best known in the field of inexpensive children's books, and available everywhere, are the LITTLE GOLDEN BOOKS, published at twenty-five cents by Simon & Schuster. They range from the traditional nursery classics, folk tales and rhymes, which are a permanent part of the child's world, to new animal stories, humor and fantasy, and the familiar doings of everyday life. They are attractively illustrated by some of our most popular artists and are sturdy in format.

Among the traditional folk tales and rhymes, the Child Study Association has included in its selected listings *Mother Goose*, compiled by Phyllis Fraser; *Bedtime Stories*, illustrated by Tenggren; *The Three Little Kittens* and *Nursery Tales*, both with pictures by Masha, and *Nursery Rhymes*, illustrated by Gertrude Elliott. The familiar *Little Red Riding Hood* as retold by Elizabeth Orton Jones, with her delightful pictures, will be a treat for the four- or five-year-old. *The Little Red Hen*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *Peter and the Wolf*, are attractive childlike versions of these oft-told stories.

All the animals of Old MacDonald's farm wander in and out of the pages of many of the series. Among these are the endearing puppy of Janette Sebring Lowry's *Poky Little Puppy*. *The Lively Little Rabbit* by Ariane, *Animals of Farmer Jones* and *A Name for Kitty*, the last by Phyllis McGinley, are slight stories but eminently suitable for the recently "out of the carriage set." *The Fuzzy Duckling*, by Jane Werner, illustrated by the Provensens, is one of the newest in this group. *The Little Pond in the Woods*, by Muriel Ward, introduces the youngest to many little woodland creatures. Zoo animals and circus stories are represented by *Animal Babies* by K. and B. Jackson, and in *Circus Time* by Marion Conger, where Tibor Gergely's delectable pictures add humor to the excitement of a day under the big top. *Little Peewee* by Dorothy Kunhardt is a gay fantasy about a circus dog.

For gadget-minded youngsters there is *Tootle*, a story about a ridiculous baby engine, by Gertrude Crampton, again with gay and comic pictures by Gergely. *The Taxi That Hurried*, by Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Irma Simonton Black and Jessie Stanton, about a taxi's adventures in a big city, is full of action and color. *Scuffy the Tugboat*, also by Gertrude Crampton, tells of an adventurous toy boat's travels

down the river to the city. In the realm of the familiar, everyday happenings where young listeners may see themselves reflected, are such LITTLE GOLDEN BOOKS as *Fix It Please* by Lucy Sprague Mitchell, a very real picture story alive with the warmth and intimacy of childhood and family incidents. *The Happy Family*, by Nicole, is a friendly account of the day's doings, while *The New Baby* by Ruth and Harold Shane with pictures by Eloise Wilkin introduces the baby sister in a way that will be helpful for the little boy or girl who has just acquired one, and to parents as well. Three other books by Lucy Sprague Mitchell in this series should be noted: *The New House in the Forest*, an appealing story with pictures by Eloise Wilkin, wherein a family builds a real house in the woods near animal friends; *A Year in the City* and *A Year on the Farm*, depicting the changing seasons in scenes both urban and rural through the eyes of young children.

For fantasy and imaginative nonsense there are Margaret Wise Brown's *Golden Sleepy Book* with fine pictures by Garth Williams and a reprinted version of that hilarious picture-tale of two little pigs, *Gaston and Josephine* by Georges DuPlaix, still retaining its nice French flavor. Outstanding, also, are three fine collections: *The Little Golden Books of Poetry*, *Hymns* and *Singing Games*, the last with pictures by Corinne Malvern. All are excellent value for the family bookshelf.

Though they sell for a dollar a package we are tempted to mention here two of Simon & Schuster's publications—*Tiny Animal Stories* and *Tiny Nonsense Stories*. Each package contains twelve tiny books, so that while they cannot be bought separately each individual book really cost less than ten cents. Done in an inspired collaboration of author Dorothy Kunhardt and artist Garth Williams, they are entirely captivating—with such enchanting titles as "Shame on You, Baby Whale!," "Look Out Baby Bears, Here He Comes!," "The Cowboy Kitten," "Mrs. Sheep's Little Lamb," "Uncle Quack," and "Poor Frightened Mr. Pig" among others. The pictures are just about perfect.

Random House, with its WONDER BOOKS formerly published at fifty-nine cents each, has recently come into the twenty-five cent field. These books have washable glossy covers and a real book-like appearance. They are lavishly illustrated in color and black and white and among them are some that in their original editions sold for a good deal more than their present price. In the group of the familiar and timeless are *The Three Little Kittens and Other Nursery*

*Tales*, with pictures by Rachel Taft Dixon. Besides the title story, the book contains four other equally well-known classics. *Famous Fairy Tales*, *Bedtime Stories* and *Story-Time Favorites*, are each a small collection of familiar favorites drawn from the works of the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, and Charles Perrault. Traditional animal heroes are represented in *Peter Rabbit and Other Stories*, illustrated by Phoebe Erickson. Here Beatrix Potter's well-loved bunny finds himself in the company of Henny Penny and the City Mouse and the Country Mouse. Other animal folk-tales are found in the collection called *Why the Bear Has a Short Tail*.

Turning from the traditional to the modern, we have *The Shy Little Horse and Other Stories*, one of the most attractive of the WONDER BOOKS. The title story and two others besides are by Margaret Wise Brown, and are told in her gentle, ingratiating manner; other stories are by Peggy Bacon and Kurt Wiese, a good buy indeed!

*The Cozy Farm*, by Louise Bonino, with very appropriate pictures by Angela, realistically represents the day-to-day bucolic life in a pleasingly repetitious picture story. With a bow to this mechanical age, WONDER BOOKS present, too, *The Magic Bus* by Maurice Dolbier with lively action pictures by Tibor Gergely. When a bus plays the role of a magic carpet, the result is bound to be fantastic and hilarious. *The Little Train That Won a Medal*, by Darlene Geis, personifies the slow, neglected little local that outstrips the fast express.

The Children's Press has a number of STAR-BRIGHT BOOKS, also a twenty-five cent series. Of these we like *Everybody Likes Butch*, by Bernice Brant, and *Hurray for Bobo*, by Joan Savage, in which an understanding Chinese mother wisely helps her little son learn to get along with his companions in America.

Rand McNally and Company shares in the low-price book range with two groups of books, some at twenty-five cents and others at fifteen. Among the former are several good titles, most especially *Bertram and the Ticklish Rhinoceros* by Paul T. Gilbert, in which the irrepressible Bertram brings home a very bulky pet with, of course, fantastic eventualities. *A Day on the Farm*, by Alf Evers with pictures by Dorothy Grider, is a pleasant, informational story of farm life as seen through the eyes of a little boy and girl. *My Truck Book*, by E. C. Reichert, deals with familiar truck types, and has realistic illustrations by Dorothy Grider showing their various functions—a fascinating book for any small boy. *Peppy, the Lonely Puppy*, by Frieda Friedman is a quiet little story very



suitable for bedtime reading.

In its lower priced group, at fifteen cents each, Rand McNally offers Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*, calling it an "abridged edition," though it contains some of R. L. S.'s most childlike verses, with pictures by Tony Brice. *A Penny for Candy*, with the hero sucking a luscious lollypop on its cover, and *Peter Pat and the Policeman* are two stories of everyday childhood experience told with a light, amusing touch. *Jiggers*, by Joy M. Lacey, is a might-be-true dog story and *Puddlejumper*, written and illustrated by Dorothea J. Snow, follows the expected and always-appealing pattern of the old trolley car that survives the junk heap—this one becomes a brightly refurbished diner with gay awnings.

The Whitman Publishing Company of Racine produces many inexpensive books of various types. Among their TELL-A-TALE BOOKS, we found *Wiggletail*, written and illustrated by Charlie, a delightful story about a tiny puppy and how he justified his name. *Sneezer*, by Estelle M. Upson, is about a stubborn little train that proves its worth by saving many lives. *Smoky, the Baby Goat*, is an appealing animal story, while *Timothy's Shoes* will be enjoyed by the very youngest. *Once Upon a Windy Day* by Jane Flory tells of the hapless adventures and rescue of a circus balloon man whose wares waft him onto the limb of a high tree.

For older children who are nature-lovers, Whitman publishes a worth-while series of guidebooks. These are three inches by five, clothbound, and easy to carry in a pocket during hikes or woodland jaunts. The *Red Book of Trees* and *The Blue Book of Trees* will help the young nature enthusiast identify many varieties and give him all the wanted information about them in picture and text. There are also guides to *Wild Flowers*, *Woodland Flowers* and *Garden Flowers*, all in the same format. In addition, there are four different books of American birds for youthful followers of Audubon. These are all very good value for the quarter that they cost.

Most welcome among Whitman's twenty-five cent sellers is their recently reprinted *Two Hundred Best Poems for Girls and Boys*—compiled by Marjorie Barrows, an excellent and highly useable collection which has been too long out of print.

Under the names of John Martin's House, James and Jonathan, and others, the Samuel Lowe Company publishes an almost bewildering array of tiny books measuring three by four inches, with hard covers, for five cents apiece. These are called LOLLY-POP BOOKS or LITTLE BOOKS and kittens, puppies,

duckling, little boys and girls cavort through their pages. They are uneven in quality but several of them will delight the child who loves the feel of a tiny book in his hand. *Patter Is Lost* is about a kitten; *My Little Book of Animals*, *Mrs. Duck's Family* and *Bounce, the Puppy*, have self-explanatory titles, as does *Bobby Had Three Pennies*. John Martin's House has a twenty-five cent list, too, called BONNIE BOOKS. *Bobbie Had a Nickel*, by Frieda Friedman, recounts in verse and pleasant pictures a small boy's dilemma and its happy solution. *The Choo-Choo Train*, comically illustrated by Oscar Fabres, is slight in story but rich in those action-packed, detailed pictures a child loves. *Hesperus Was an Automobile* by Morris Walsh deals in amusing style with the rehabilitation and new career of the car named in the title.

A new departure in attractive books priced just right (a quarter) for the junior high school set's budget, is the new series of paper covered reprints of well-known current favorites. This series, called COMET BOOKS, is published by Pocket Books, Inc., and includes reading that is worth-while and entertaining. Girls will like *Peggy Covers the News* by Emma Bugbee, and *Sue Barton, Student Nurse* by Helen Dore Boylston. These are young novels with authoritative career information woven into light, enjoyable stories. *Star-Spangled Summer*, by Janet Lambert, tells of a happy-go-lucky family stationed at a military post. For boys there is *Wagons Westward*, written and illustrated by Armstrong Sperry, an outstanding story of the opening of the Southwest, with Indians and frontier scouts playing major roles. *Batter Up* by Jackson Scholz, and *Bat Boy of the Giants* by Garth Garreau, are good baseball yarns. *Tawny* by Thomas C. Hinkle, the story of an outlaw dog befriended by a range boy, and *Silver, the Story of a Wild Horse*, by the same author, are fine animal stories as is *Big Red* by Jim Kjelgaard. Good mystery and adventure are found in Howard Brier's *Skycruiser* and in Howard Pease's *The Tattooed Man*, which has become a contemporary teen-age classic.

Because all titles mentioned here are not usually available at all selling outlets at any given time, we have presented a wide grouping of desirable titles to offer a range of choice. Each of these books is worth its price. The whole development of this field of publishing is one for which parents and children may well be grateful.

BELLA KORAL

HELEN PLOTZ

Children's Book Committee

## SOME CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

(Continued from page 104)

which unduly incites or arouses the child's sexuality.

All the psychological data evolved by psychoanalysis are of fundamental importance to education, and mental hygiene is nowadays included in the meaning of the term "education." But the aims of education—and sex education is part of it—go beyond therapy or mental hygiene. Education aims at favoring the best possible intellectual and emotional development of an individual and his best adjustment to a given culture in society. This, we know, is achieved by what we call sublimated instinctual drives—tendencies so transformed that their original sexual or aggressive aims are replaced by goals of a more general cultural value.

Although we do not know enough about these problems yet, we might be safely stated that sublimations are thwarted both by too much deprivation and by too much gratification. We know that even intellectual development may be inhibited by too severe prohibitions. On the other hand, too uninhibited instinctual gratifications in children and adolescents may well prevent the formation of lasting sublimation and favorable adjustment which are the fundamental aims of education.

It is impossible to eliminate psychological conflicts in the human being either by prohibitions or by indulgence, but their intensity can and should be attenuated. As a matter of fact, conflicts do not all lead to neurotic disturbances. They are essential for the child's ego development and may be the stimulus for the development of certain abilities and certain functions.

Although the problems involved in sex education are extremely complex and paradoxical, it would be a mistake to conclude that the best solution would be to revert to the simple old-fashioned method of education. Although the problem of sex education is complicated there is a desirable optimum which lies between the two extremes of prohibition and overpermissiveness. Can this optimum be described in very simple terms, valid for all individuals? I do not believe so. Psychoanalysis has taught us that education is based on interpersonal relationships between the child on the one hand and the parents and educators on the other. That is why it is so difficult to give any ready-made, practical advice.

It is possible, however, to draw some general conclusions. Let us not forget that the severity of stern, old-fashioned upbringing should not be confused with cruelty, and that permissiveness is not to be confused

with seductiveness. Cruelty and seductiveness are the two extremes which are to be avoided in sex education. Cruelty might lead to a misapplication of punishment and hence to sexual perversions. Seduction and overpermissiveness might create not only neurosis but anti-social behavior. Children of over-indulgent parents may resent and feel rejected by their parents, whose indifference they feel does not support their struggle against their own sexual desires.

We know how important this struggle is, for instance, in the latency period and in adolescence. It is important but not enough to give a child the right information. What counts most is giving the child the possibility of talking, of expressing his thoughts and fears, thus establishing a stable relationship between the child and the educator. That is why it is so important that parents should be sufficiently informed about the physical as well as the mental development of their children, that they be sufficiently interested in them so as to be aware of their problems as they arise and thus be able to help in their children's development.

Whatever mistakes parents may make in matters of sex education, if they treat the child with love and affection these mistakes will never be as serious as those which might stem from the most up-to-date scientific procedure from which warmth is lacking.

## For Radio and Reading

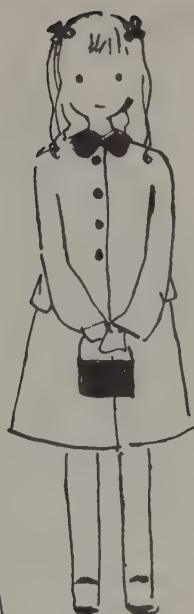
*The Straw Ox and Other Tales.* \$1.72.

*The Bag of Fire and Other Tales.* \$1.80. Both by Fan Kissen. Houghton Mifflin.

Folk tales, familiar and otherwise, from many lands are here presented in radio script form, with directions for producing them before a microphone, real or fancied. These are the first two volumes of a series designed for the elementary school oral reading program, but they will be especially welcomed by radio-minded youngsters and their teachers. The story material has been thoughtfully selected to point up the similarities of peoples in different lands and cultures. The arrangement for radio broadcast, the radio terminology, tips on production, staging and sound effects (complete with diagrams) are inviting and stimulating. These books are a most valuable new departure in story presentation and fill a real need for dramatized material ready at hand for children to use, whether for school broadcasting, classroom or home dramatics.

J. F.





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# News and Notes

## Schools and Camps

A new and active committee of the Child Study Association is concerned with securing more up-to-date and authentic information about schools and camps in the vicinity of New York City for the benefit of parents who are seeking placement for their children. The Association has long had a School and Camp Information Service, conducted by Dr. Mary W. Colley. This service is popular with parents, particularly those coming to New York from other areas who are not familiar with educational facilities here. Dr. Colley, however, runs a one-man department and lacks the field staff necessary to keep her information on schools and camps up to date. This new committee, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Richard B. Ballou, has undertaken on a volunteer basis to serve as such a field staff.

Members of the committee are parents, psychologists and teachers who have either worked in schools of the area or have struggled themselves with the problem of finding schools for their children.

## Make Friends with Books

The Children's Book Council, headquarters for Book Week, and a year-round center of information and promotion on books for children, is now assisting in the launching of Book Week all over the world to be held simultaneously with that in the United States.

The thirty-first annual celebration of Book Week will take place this year from November 13 through 19, with the slogan "Make Friends with Books." The 1949 Book Week poster, designed by Elizabeth Tyler Wolcott, is in full-color, 17 by 22 inches. Copies of the poster, together with all other Book Week material, with prices, are listed in the free Book Week Manual, available from now on by writing The Children's Book Council, 62 West 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y. Those already on the Council's mailing lists will automatically receive a copy of this manual.

High spot of Book Week in New York City will be The New York Times Boys' and Girls' Book Fair, in cooperation with The Children's Book Council. This third annual fair will be held November 18 through 21, at the American Museum of Natural History.

## LOOKING AT THE COMICS—1949

(Continued from page 112)

of the present-day needs of children for contemporary, fast-moving, action-full, easy-to-read stories. They are in process of change—some of it good, some in the wrong direction. We believe that the community, by its own awareness of values and standards, can influence the direction of this change—not by censorship and imposed "regulation" but by a process of education and selection. There is no need to "reform" out of them those elements which seem to give them such appeal for children. Yet within this framework some of them have shown a readiness to adopt, or rather to *adapt*, standards that have proved acceptable to parents, as well as to children, in other media. Perhaps, too, they challenge us to re-examine some of our traditional concepts of what kinds of reading children like.

In any case, comics reading is a part of our children's lives today. Their interest fluctuates, is perhaps more acute at certain ages and stages than at others, reaching its peak for most children between the ages of eight and twelve.

The task of parents and the community in regard to comics is threefold: to guide our children toward an appreciation of values and so toward effective selectivity in their comics reading; to insist on standards of suitability and taste in comics magazines intended for children; and to learn how best to develop this popular medium of communication as one of many available for the children's pleasure and profit.

JOSETTE FRANK

KATIE HART

For the Committee

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